

currently suffers from numerous medical afflictions, afflictions only worsened by the grotesquely inhuman quarters in which he is forced to survive. In November 2005, Mr. Ramón Castillo was diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver. His family pleaded to prison officials that he be conditionally released to attend to his rapidly deteriorating health. Their pleas went unanswered and in February 2007 prison personnel explained that he would be scheduled to undergo a laparoscopic biopsy of his liver; a procedure that Mr. Ramón Castillo had already endured in 2005 and that the prison thugs knew he would be forced to refuse because he is too weak to undergo the procedure because of malnutrition, lack of medical attention, and the seriousness of his diabetes and other illnesses.

It is unconscionable for any man to be confined in the grotesquely inhuman Castro dungeons for his belief in democracy. Mr. Ramón Castillo is one of the many heroes of the Cuban pro-democracy movement who are chained in the dungeons of the dictatorship for their beliefs. Mr. Ramón Castillo represents the best of the Cuban nation, a nation oppressed but not destroyed, bound and gagged but not resigned to live in tyranny.

Madam Speaker, it is intolerable that Mr. Ramón Castillo is languishing in the totalitarian gulag 90 miles from our shore simply because he believes in freedom and democracy. He is a symbol of freedom and democracy who will always be remembered when freedom reigns again in Cuba. My colleagues, we must demand the immediate release of José Gabriel Ramón Castillo, and every prisoner of conscience suffering in totalitarian Cuba.

---

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 26, 2007*

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, on Monday, June 25, 2007, I was absent from the House.

Had I been present I would have voted: On rollcall No. 548—"yea"—H. Res. 189—Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" should be established. On rollcall No. 549—"yea"—H.R. 2546—To designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Asheville, North Carolina, as the "Charles George Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center."

---

#### A TRIBUTE TO FORMER NEW JERSEY STATE SENATOR BYRON BAER

### HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 26, 2007*

Mr. ROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my good friend, Byron M. Baer, a successful and beloved figure in New Jersey politics. Mr. Baer died Sunday,

June 24, 2007 of complications from congestive heart failure.

Byron Baer, a 50-year resident of Englewood, NJ, was a legendary figure in Bergen County, and indeed, the entire Garden State. He served 11 terms in the New Jersey State Assembly before winning the District 37 State Senate seat in 1993. He served in this capacity with great distinction until illness forced his resignation in September 2005.

He is perhaps best known for legislation he introduced in 1974, the "Open Public Meeting Act" (or Sunshine Law), an Act requiring that official business be conducted in public forums and not behind closed doors. As a champion of open government, Byron Baer worked tirelessly with the media and his colleagues in the State government to ensure that open meetings would become a national model for all States. He was singularly honored in 2006 when the Act was renamed the "Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act." He was also inducted in the Open Government Hall of Fame on the recommendation of the National Freedom of Information Coalition and the Society of Professional Journalists.

Among his many notable legislative accomplishments were the enactment of the Toxic Catastrophe Prevention Act, a law establishing safeguards to prevent chemical industry disasters; a truth-in-pricing law; and reestablishment of the Office of the Child Advocate, an independent watchdog of the state's child welfare system; and he was a primary sponsor of New Jersey's Identity Theft Prevention Act.

His passing will leave an enormous void in the New Jersey political arena. Although declining health contributed to his retirement two years ago, he remained a respected and revered resource for state legislators in Trenton. Byron Baer was devoted to his constituency, and he was a full-time lawmaker. As such, he understood every word and nuance in the legislative process and he never gave up in his efforts to fight for the environment, organized labor, children, migrant workers, and the less fortunate in our society.

I join with his many friends and colleagues in mourning his passing and I extend my heartfelt condolences to his beloved wife, Linda, his brother, Donald, his children David Baer and Laura Baer Levine, his stepchildren Lara Rodriguez and Roger Pollitt, and his three grandchildren. He was a great man and he will be greatly missed.

---

#### EDMUND MUSKIE AWARD FOR NANCY PELOSI

### HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 26, 2007*

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, the following remarks were delivered by Peter Kovler, Chairman of the Board of the Center for National Policy in Washington, DC, on June 19, 2007, on the occasion of Speaker NANCY PELOSI being the recipient of the Center's prestigious Edmund Muskie Award.

In the entire history of the United States, I believe there have been three powerful Speakers of the House during moments of war. Henry Clay in the nineteenth century,

Sam Rayburn during World War II and now Nancy Pelosi during our simultaneous wars on terror and the war in Iraq.

But there is one stark difference between Speaker Pelosi and Speakers Clay and Rayburn; and that is she has an opposing view to the contemporaneous President of the United States on how those wars should be run; and her courage and her steadfastness in those views arguably make her the single most significant Speaker in our Nation's history.

How did Nancy Pelosi get to this point; and how this nation is so fortunate to have her; and how an award named for Ed Muskie is so appropriate are a few of the points I would quickly like to address.

In my view Nancy Pelosi has come to be our most important foreign policy Speaker in part because of how she served in the House before her rise to this position. As a 10 year member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, she was its longest continuous serving member. The experience and knowledge gained there has made her able to deal with these issues in a sophisticated way, rather than just guessing or speculating at what might be important. No wonder she had the knowledge and skepticism that comes with knowledge to oppose initially the Iraq invasion and occupation, even when that kind of vote was so difficult in those political and cultural circumstances. And no wonder she knew so much about terrorism issues that she would have the confidence to make implementation of the 9/11 Commission recommendations her very first piece of legislation in her first five months.

How fortunate are we to have her as the Speaker of the House is one way to pose a question, but a second way is to ask what it would be like if we had a speaker who had no background in foreign policy analysis or in intelligence analysis and not even any curiosity about the subject. I think the answer is obvious, and we would have a House of Representatives that was at best disinterested, but most likely passive in the face of the Executive Branch and passive in the face of an American public that is crying out for better alternatives.

Finally, I would like to address why the Muskie Award is especially appropriate for Speaker Pelosi.

For those of us in this room of a certain age, we know that Ed Muskie's public life was inextricably tied to the Vietnam War. He wrestled with that as the vice presidential candidate in 1968. It happened again in his seeking the presidential nomination in 1972. And though not getting wide public notice, he did so again in the 1980s when as chairman of this organization he ran numerous meetings on Vietnam policy, led a delegation to Hanoi and, though still controversial, advocated a new policy towards that country that included their recognition.

I bring this up because the Vietnam War has played such an enormous part in our thinking on the Iraq War. For better or worse, it is the single most significant historical parallel we use in trying to come to grips with the Iraq War.

And I believe that I can say with enormous confidence that Ed, first a believer in the Vietnam mission and then a skeptic about the choices we made, would have been so very proud to have Speaker Pelosi as the recipient of an award named after him.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you this year's winner of the Center For National Policy's Edmund Muskie Award, Speaker Nancy Pelosi.